THE AWAKENING OF ASIA.

BY

RUCHI RAM SAHNI,

RETIRED PROFESSOR, GOVERNMENT COLLEGE,

LAHORE.

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FOREWORD.

In these pages an attempt has been made to present to the general reader a rapid panoramic view of the procession of events in Asiatic countries on either side of India. The period covered may be roughly taken to be a hundred years, commencing from the disappearance of the spectre of Napoleon from the European stage and ending with the outbreak of the Great War.

The chief interest of the narrative lies in the amazing social and political upheaval which was witnessed all over the old continent during the opening decade of the present century. It is my intention to follow up this small volume with another devoted exclusively to the simultaneous awakening of India.

Rattigan Road,
December 20, 1929.

RUCHI RAM SAHNI.

CONTENTS.

AWAKENING OF ASIA.

CHAPTER I.

I

The commencement of the present century witnessed an amazing political upheaval all over Asia. Without attempting to trace to its sources the new strange ferment which expressed itself in nationalistic outbursts everywhere at this time, it will, perhaps, be safe to attribute it mainly to a natural reaction against the aggressive European imperialism of the previous twenty or thirty years. The reaction was as much intellectual and cultural as it was economic and political. In this connection, it need scarcely be mentioned that, as used in the discussion of socio-political questions, "East" and "West" are not geographical terms. They represent two

opposite types of culture, namely the European and the non-European cultures. In this sense, the greater part of Africa of the nineteenth century may be said to belong to Asia as much as Arabia, for instance. Practically the whole of northern Africa, comprising more than half of the dark continent, was peopled by tribes which professed the Muslim religion, owed real or nominal allegiance to Turkey and had Arab blood in their veins. Broadly speaking, the colour line is a more prominent dividing line between the East and West than anything else.

The cutting of the Suez Canal in 1869 was, indirectly, a most important factor in the recent awakening in Asia. The shorter route whetted the imperialistic appetites and ambitions of European nations and brought them into more intimate contact with the older peoples of the East. The backward and ill-organised races

soon came under the political or economic domination of the West. Had it not been for the mutual suspicions and jealousies of the European nations, the whole of Asia would long since have been divided among them. As it was, for half a century and more, formulæ like the 'policy of the open door' and 'peaceful penetration' had been pressed into service in the Europeanisation of Asia. Then followed the era of the 'capitalutions'. To these was subsequently added a device which only thinly disguised the virtual partition of weak Asiatic kingdoms among powerful claimants. 'The spheres of influence', as the new political invention was called, were designed to accommodate the rival ambitions of nations which had acquired actual or potential interests in the coveted territories.

Early in the nineteenth century, England was by far the strongest European power in Asia. As we have already said

elsewhere, by the time Queen Victoria became Empress of India (1877), the British Government had rounded off her Indian Empire very much to her present frontiers, except that the whole of Baluchistan was added between 1877 and 1880, while Upper Burmah was included at a still later date (1886). In other parts of Asia, England had contented herself with securing control over a chain of strategic points such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Ceylon, the Persian Gulf, Aden and the Suez Canal.

One result of the Opium War, which gave England a foothold in the Far East at Hong-Kong, was the opening up of a number of Chinese ports to foreign trade. This was an event of great significance to the celestial empire, as the barriers which had so long shut off the western influences from her shores were, for good or for evil, broken down for ever. In the following year, France acquired, by gentle pressure,

an "undefined right of intervention on behalf of native Christians," which was subsequently expanded into a sort of "religious protectorate over Catholic converts in China" (1858). About the same time, the mal-treatment of some French missionaries led to armed expeditions being sent against Anam, resulting eventually in the annexation of Cochin China (1862) and part of Cambodia, followed by the establishment of a protectorate over Anam. The Chinese Government resented the encroachment on her suzerainty over these areas. Its troops made a show of force but were beaten, and, in 1885, bowing to the inevitable, China formally recognised French sway over her lost territories. It was really the fear of France extending her influence further westwards into the kingdom of the Theebaw (also a sort of Chinese province), which led Lord Dufferin to anticipate England's rival by taking Upper Burmah (1886).

Meanwhile Russia had not been idle. Besides occupying herself with colonising Siberia with convict settlements and political prisoners, she had taken the Chinese province of Amur, and, at the extreme south end of it, established the well known harbour of Vladivostock (1860).

These adventures made Russia a Pacific power and brought her face to face with Japan. In 1875, Russia made Japan give up to her the northern half of Sukhalin. From this moment, Japan began to realise that her very existence as a Pacific power was threatened by the new comer and that, sooner or later, a serious conflict with her was inevitable. In another part of Asia also, Russia had been advancing steadily forward. By the year (1878), she had annexed Caucasus, absorbed important slices of Turkey and some of the Khanates in semi-independent Turkistan, and was threateningly near the north-western frontiers of Afghanistan.

Such was the condition of Asia at the time the Berlin Congress came to be held, 1878. As for Africa, with the exception of Algeria (which had been French since 1830), the Anglo-Dutch colonies in the south and the Portugese Settlement in the East, practically the whole continent was what western political philosophy heartlessly calls 'no man's land'. The weakness of the two old continents could not but invite aggression. Europe was seized with a veritable imperialistic fever without a parallel in the history of the world. The Asiatic nations were quite as conscious of their defenceless position as the white nations were of their superior organisation and material resources and equipment, which the recent advances in science and industry had placed at their command. In the words of an English historian*, with

*Ramsay Muir in *The Expansion of Europe* (1922), page 143.

the year 1878 opened a new era of "eager competition for the control of the still unoccupied regions of the world in which the concerns of remote lands suddenly became matters of supreme moment to the great European Powers, and the peace of the world was endangered by questions arising in China, Siam, in Morocco or Soudan or the islands of the Pacific". And he goes on to say that "the control of Europe over the non-European world in a single generation was completed and confirmed". Another well-known writer* characterises the scramble in Asia and Africa in the following stinging words :

"The conduct of the Most Christian Powers during the past few years has borne a striking resemblance to that of robber bands descending upon an unarmed and helpless population of peasants. So far from respect-

*Sidney Low in his article on *The Most Chrisitan Powers* in *The Fortnightly Review* for March 1912 quoted by Lathrop Stoddard in *The New World of Islam*, 1921, page 88.

ing the rights of other nations, they have exhibited the most complete and cynical disregard for them. They have, in fact, asserted the claim of the strong to prey upon the weak, and the utter impotence of all ethical considerations in the face of armed force, with a crude nakedness which few Eastern military conquerors could well have surpassed".

As we know, in the Far East, Japan met the impending danger of foreign aggression by either bodily introducing western political institutions or adapting them to her own ancient culture and social needs. The rapidity and thoroughness with which she was able to overhaul her old administrative machinery and transform herself into a nation on the European pattern have justly excited the admiration of the world. At the other end of Asia, Turkey, under her shrewd Sultan-Caliph, Abdul Hamid, tried to fortify herself by an appeal to the Pan-Islamic sentiment of the Faithful. The Muslim populations all over the world responded to the call with passionate enthusiasm, bordering, now and again,

even on religious frenzy, but in the event failed to stem the rising tide of western imperialism. How Japan succeeded while Turkey failed in their respective plans of self-protection makes a narrative of absorbing interest to an Asiatic. We can only give the broad outlines of it here.

II

And first about Japan. In 1853, Commodore Perry with a squadron of warships paid a visit to the islands and under threat of bombardment, extorted a treaty allowing American whaling boats to use certain ports. The chief European Powers, of course, claimed similar privileges and soon five Japanese ports were declared open to foreign trade. The European nations also obtained extra-territorial rights by which their subjects could be tried only by their own courts. In 1862, the murder of some British subjects led to a naval

demonstration in which British, French, Dutch and American warships participated. This and other similar incidents produced a deep impression upon the ruling classes in Japan and, after a short period of social turmoil and internal revolution, the little island-kingdom so completely transformed itself that, by 1868 it came to be regarded by European nations as a "Western Power".

In 1895, war broke out between Japan and China in connection with a dispute over Korea. To the surprise of all, the little Jap won a complete victory over her opponent. China was forced to recognise the independence of Korea, and to give up to Japan the island of Formosa and the peninsula of Liaotung including the famous harbour of Port Arthur (April 17, 1895). Now, it did not suit the western nations to see a new naval Power emerge in the Pacific to contend with them the supremacy

of the eastern seas. Japan was soon robbed of the full fruits of her victory. A week had hardly passed, when she received a collective demand from Russia, France and Germany objecting to her occupation of Liaotung. As she was not strong enough to oppose the demand by force of arms, she yielded. She did not forget the lesson, but bided her time to make good the loss. At the same time, she redoubled her energies to improve her military resources and organisation so as to be able to meet a European Power both on land and sea.

During the next three or four years, things moved rapidly in China. Taking advantage of the weakness of that unhappy country, every European nation rushed to do the best she could for herself at the expense of the now decrepit celestial empire. In November 1897, Germany seized Kiao-Chau which gave her a fine naval

base in the Pacific Ocean. Russia compensated herself by occupying Port Arthur, which, besides being a strong strategic position, was a warm water harbour (March 1898). England protested but eventually was content with establishing herself at Wei-Hai-Wei. Not to be behind others, France took the harbour of Kwang-tschonan.

Four of the greatest European sea-Powers had thus obtained naval bases in the Pacific Ocean. Japan looked about for a friend and ally who could stand by her in case she was called upon to meet more than one Power in the field. Obviously, she could not approach any of the three Powers which had sent her the joint-note and forcibly deprived her of Port Arthur. She had not forgotten the loss or the humiliation inflicted on her in the very hour of her triumph. For many reasons, England was the best choice she could

make. She was the greatest naval Power in the world. She had vital interests at stake east of the Suez Canal. She looked upon both Russia and Germany with suspicion and distrust, while France was her traditional foe. More important still, England was at this time feeling her isolation as she had never done before. She had been anxiously casting about for a friend, but, so far her overtures had not met with much success.

In January 1902, an Anglo-Japanese Alliance was signed. It greatly raised the prestige of Japan. The rival European Powers smiled at it, but it suited the old Island Empire of the west and the rising Island Empire of the east. By the treaty of peace, both the signatories agreed to maintain the *status quo* in Eastern Asia. In the event of a war between Russia and Japan, England undertook to remain neutral, but promised to come to the

support of her ally in case she had to fight the combined forces of two European Powers. As we have said before, Japan had made up her mind to try conclusions with Russia, should the occasion arise. To that end, she was perfecting her military organisation which she expected to be ready by the end of the following year. Besides giving her the necessary breathing time, the treaty secured her against being overwhelmed by a sudden combination of two or more naval Powers. On the part of England, it may be said that, she had not yet done with the Boer War and the European situation was full of complications and ominous possibilities. Her most important possessions lay in the east and the assurance that she could count upon effective help from an ally in those regions was not to be slighted.

The crisis was not long in coming. The story is well-known and need not be

given here. The dispute between Russia and Japan arose over the question of the independence of Korea and the evacuation of Manchuria. The victory of Japan over one of the Great Powers, was a surprise for every one, the more so, as it was decisive both on land and sea. The sacrifices which Japan made cheerfully before her proud adversary was humbled to the dust form a glorious page in the military history of the world. The Russian army was defeated at Mukden in Manchuria (March 1905), while the Czar's great fleet which had taken months on its journey from the Baltic to the Pacific was destroyed in a single action at Tsushima (May 1905). Through the intervention of President Roosvelt, peace was concluded between the two belligerents in August. Japan recovered possession of the Liao-Tung peninsula with Port Arthur and Russia evacuated Manchuria and recognised the

preponderating influence of Japan in Korea.

The signal defeat of a great European power like Russia at the hands of a small eastern nation created a stir all over Asia. A short while before, the Boer struggle for independence against untold odds had, in the earlier stages at least, literally staggered humanity. The stubborn fight which a few thousands of peasants jealous of their freedom had put up day after day against a mighty empire, the thrilling incidents connected with the marvellous exploits and the hair-breadth escapes of De Wet, the pluck and skilled generalship of Cronji and the long seige of Ladysmith—who can forget the extraordinary interest which they excited in India. And now, lo and behold; the little Japs had by sheer dint of patriotic fervour, combined with unshakable determination to make every sacrifice that the occasion might demand of them, inflicted a crushing blow upon the Russian Collossus.

For once the spell of the west over the east was broken.

The whole of Asia rejoiced to learn that the Jap had laid the Polar Bear low. As a mark of admiration for Jap the victor, Indian students in large numbers began to go to Japanese schools and universities mainly for the purpose of technical education. Jujutsu clubs were started in the university centres in India and in many private colleges the study of the Japanese language was taken up in earnest. Japanese influence was felt in various other directions. Japan was not slow to take advantage of this change in Indian sentiment and feeling. Japanese articles of every day use now became more popular than they had ever been before.

It should be added that the admiration for Japan was merely intellectual. There was no disposition on the part of any Asiatic nation to entrust the leadership of the

Asiatic hegemony to her. On the contrary, a genuine fear existed that Japan would probably exploit the other Asiatic countries quite as much as the European nations had been doing. This impression was confirmed by the treatment which China had received at the hands of Japan. Indeed, it might well be doubted if at the time of the Japanese victory over Russia and for many years thereafter, any European nation was more hated by the Chinese than the people of the Land of the Rising Sun. In India, the dominant feeling was one of fear mixed with a vague admiration for her power of organisation, her dogged persistence and her industrial and military advancement.

The fear had its roots in the idea that, flushed with her great victory, Japan might sometime cast longing looks on the fertile plains of India. For a similar reason, the renewal of the treaty of Alliance between Japan and Great Britain after

the Russo-Japanese war, was received with no small suspicion in India. Apart from other considerations, it was regarded as a serious reflection alike on the loyalty and manliness of India. Indians believed that if they were trusted by England and if their martial races were trained and equipped as thoroughly as the Japanese soldiers were, they would acquit themselves on the field of battle with equal distinction in defence of their own country.

In one way or another, the effects of the happenings in the Far East were felt all the world over. Europe began to revise its old political doctrines concerning the inherent inferiority of oriental peoples, if only to fasten its hold all the more strongly upon them. On the other hand, in the East, a marked change was noticeable in the tone and temper of the people. For one thing, they became more self-assertive than they were ever known to be. Even the man in the street felt the stirrings of a new

conscious nationalism in his heart. All round there was a wonderful awakening which disturbed the old scale of national values and set up a new one. From this time we may also date the birth of a vague Pan-Asiatic feeling. People began to wonder how the white nations could hold in political and economic bondage the non-European races which were double their own numbers. And there were not wanting a few persons in every eastern land whose minds were filled with higher national ambitions than any that they had till then dared to cherish.

III

It is worthy of note that the repercussions of the Japanese victory were felt quite as much in Russia itself as in any purely Asiatic country. For her it was an eye-opener. Among the middle classes, it caused a deep searching of the heart. During the last stages of the war, when Russian forces began to meet with reverses in the field,

popular restlessness manifested itself in industrial strikes attended with excesses of various kinds. There were loud demands for a change in the system of Government which was responsible for so much disgrace and humiliation to the country. In January 1905, a big procession proceeded to the Czar's palace and presented a petition for a constitution. At various places, there were disturbances, strikes or murders. The Czar and his advisors softened before the stern logic of events. In August a pronouncement was issued granting a constitution. A deliberative and legislative Assembly was promised without whose consent no new laws were to be passed. At the same time, the full rights of citizenship were to be conferred upon the people, comprising "the inviolability of the person, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, the right of organising public meetings and founding associations." Both in Europe and Asia,

people were filled with astonishment at the wisdom and generosity of the Czar.

In the spring of 1906 elections for the first Duma, or Russian Parliament, were held. The Duma met from May to July, but even the first day's sitting dashed all hopes of a liberal and progressive constitution to the ground. The majority of the members were Constitutional Democrats, the Labour Party coming next after them. The house pressed for a constitutional ministry, but the Government met the demand with evasion and prevarication. Both the dominant parties then joined their forces. The inevitable deadlocks between the Government and the Opposition followed. Meanwhile, the notorious Stolypin, Chief of the Police, used his powers ruthlessly to put down the movement for political emancipation. In 1911, he himself fell a victim to the popular wrath. In the midst of the murmurings and protests of the *intelligentsia*,

alternating with disturbances of the popular elements, the Duma was dissolved (1906). From that time to the commencement of the Great War, with brief intervals when a ray of hope was visible for the resuscitation of constitutional government, Russia remained an absolute autocracy. The popular discontent was again driven underground. It was only prevented from coming to the surface by tracking out the politicals and putting them out of the way, or distracting the public attention from the misgovernment of the country by attempts at changing the map of the world, specially in the Balkan regions, on the one hand, and Central Asia, on the other. During the Great War, Russia was the ally of England, but, as often happens in such circumstances, within three years the political pendulum swung right to the opposite side. The reverses of Russia again

brought the discontented elements to the front. In their desire to banish czardom from their country, they barbarously put the Czar and his family out of the way altogether. In the place of absolute despotism they installed *Bolshevism*. The reaction from one extreme to the other was as sudden as it was complete. Bolshevism is an unhealthy growth but so was its parent, czardom.

IV

From Japan and Russia let us pass on to China. There as elsewhere in the east, the impact of European culture and civilisation, coming in the wake of the new imperialism, was producing far-reaching results, to which the foreign economic and political exploitation had made its own contribution. In the nineties, China was seriously perturbed about its future. The foreigners were intensely hated. There was a strong popular ferment at work.

Numerous social reform associations came into existence. Hundreds of youths of high families sought admission to the foreign university at Pekin. Standard works on science, philosophy and sociology were translated from the European languages. New schools and colleges teaching the foreign languages and sciences were established. The Emperor issued edicts transforming the whole system of Government. Unfortunately, the reactionary forces surrounding the Court soon reasserted themselves and the edicts were cancelled. One of the edicts was intended to convert important temples with their endowments of landed estates into educational institutions. The 'Boxer movement' of this time as it is called by all western writers, was itself as much the outcome of political as of moral awakening. Essentially, it was a nationalistic movement of self-consciousness, self-reliance and self-respect.

Exactly similar movements sprang up about the same time, or a little later, in India, Persia and Turkey. It is probable that the Chinese Government was behind the 'Boxers." All such movements, when repressed, assume, here and there, extreme forms and transgress the limits of propriety, justice and moderation. No wonder the Boxer movement also laid itself open to the charge of having committed serious excesses.

A most notable indication of the newly awakened spirit was the revolt against the use of opium which burst out at this time all over the country. This was not, indeed, the first occasion when strong popular feeling against the drug had manifested itself, but the passion for reform which now possessed the people showed strange symptoms of Puritanic fervour and frenzy. The opium revolt is at all times a sure barometer of Chinese temper,

but if there was any doubt as to the sincerity or intensity of public feeling in the present case, it was soon removed by the rapidly falling figures of Indian revenue from the sale of the "black poison." In one year alone, the opium receipts showed a diminution to the tune of £ 361,800. The Chinese Government approached the Government of India, 1906, for a revision of the opium agreement. In this connection, it is significant of the high moral plane on which the Indian politician moves and works for the liberation of his own country that, led by G. K. Gokhale, the public here actually welcomed the loss which the Chinese awakening had caused to the Indian finances.

Another reform over which the Chinese were at this time greatly excited was the old custom of 'deforming' the feet of women so that they might be considered stylish and fashionable. A little incident will

show the importance which the Chinese administrators attached to the abolition of the foot-binding habit. Li Hung-Chung, the famous Chinese statesman, was once asked what he thought of it. He said, "If you unbind the women's feet, you will make them so strong, and the men so strong too, that they will overturn the dynasty." These words were prophetic. As we know, the Manchus were banished not long after the reform was carried out.

We will mention one other reform which exercised the public mind in China a good deal at this time. Somehow or other, the Chinese were seized with the idea that their "pig-tails"—to use the foreigner's contemptuous phrase—were a sign and badge of their national backwardness, if not also of their folly. Historically, the "pig-tail" had been forced on the Chinese population by its Manchu conquerors as a "badge of subjection," but it had since

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gradually become "the most characteristic and most cherished feature of the national dress.* The "hair cutting" movement rapidly spread among the university students and, if the legend, which obtained a wide currency at the time, is to be believed, young men were to be seen running about in the streets of the bigger towns shouting for the barber.

The forces to which we have been referring could not but lead to a political upheaval. It is not necessary for our present purposes to describe the various stages of the revolution which swept away the despotic sway of the Manchu dynasty. On January 5, 1912, China was proclaimed a

* Similarly the Mughal emperors are said to have imposed the *Kangri* upon the Kashmiris. The *Kangri* is a small earthen vessel containing some burning charcoal which the Kashmiris carry in the left hand next to their body, in order to keep themselves warm in the winter season.

Republic with San-Yat-San as its provisional President. In an inspiring manifesto the new Republican Government explained "to the free peoples of the world," "the reasons justifying the revolution," and with exultation mixed with a touch of pathos it added:

"For the first time in history, an inglorious bondage is transformed into inspiring freedom. The policy of the Manchus has been of unequivocal seclusion and unyielding tyranny. Beneath it we have bitterly suffered."

CHAPTER II.

The Travail of Islam.*

I.

In the present and the two following chapters we propose to deal with the working of western imperialism in the Muslim countries of Asia and Africa. It is a moving story, albeit one of melancholy interest, and not to the followers of the Crescent alone. Budhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, these four great faiths share among themselves the spiritual allegiance of practically the whole of mankind. India gave birth to two, but she drove out the younger one, which soon spread over Eastern Asia and is

* The present writer had originally intended to devote a separate volume to the fascinating subject which he has adopted as the sub-title of this chapter. Want of time alone has compelled him to abandon the idea.

to-day numerically the greatest world religion. The other two religions arose in Western Asia, not far from each other. Here the older religion, travelling westward, conquered Europe completely.

The tragedy is that, Christian Europe, armed with the resources and appliances which the scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century have put at its command, has taken upon itself to dominate and exploit the rest of the older hemisphere. We may blink at the fact for a time, but it is becoming more and more evident that the greatest problem of the future will be the colour problem. Already, Asia—weak and distracted as it is—is chafing at the thought that one-third of the human race should hold the remaining two-thirds in economic and political bondage, and, in every eastern country, people are dreaming of a "Pan-Asiatic League" or a "Federation of Asiatic Nations". For the moment these are

idle dreams, but they are, at least, an index to the deeper stirrings of the Spirit of Asia.

II

This is merely an 'aside'. Returning to our story, let us begin with Persia. As we know, early in the nineteenth century, both France and England were courting the friendship of Persia. England so far succeeded in winning her good-will as to make an alliance with her, 1814. But as soon as the danger of Napoleon invading India was over, England withdrew from certain inconvenient stipulations in the treaty, fearing that her weak partner might lead her into serious complications with Russia.

Meanwhile, Russia was steadily nibbling away one district after another from the western and north-eastern possessions of Persia. The process was continued decade after decade. From 1839, the advance of Russia eastwards became even more determined than ever, so

much so that before long it came to be regarded as a menace to India. Some called it "Russian peril", while others looked upon it as "Russian bogey", raised in the wider interests of British imperialism. In our own opinion, it was both. The 'peril' was so remote that even laymen laughed at it. The cry was heard even when the British dominions did not extend beyond the Sutlej. Its constant re-iteration only helped to fill the minds of the common people in India with exaggerated notions of the military power of Russia.

To make up for her losses in the north and north-east, Persia more than once came into conflict with her eastern neighbour. She laid claim to the whole of Afghanistan on the ridiculous plea of its having been at one time part of the empire of Nadir Shah, "the Napoleon of Asia". From 1832 to 1857, Persia made three attempts to annex Herat. She even succeeded once in occupying and holding the town for a few months. England could

not allow the "key to India"* to remain in the hands of Persia. She exerted military pressure under Sir James Outram with such good effect that she not only forced Persia to abandon Herat, but also increased her own influence on the mainland on either side of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. The province of Herat now became a semi-independent principality under the suzerainty of Persia, but in 1863 it was captured by Dost Mohammad and absorbed into Afghanistan.

It only remains to record that while all these changes were taking place in the far off territories which were once Persian, England annexed the whole of Baluchistan including the extensive waste tracts bordering on the Indian Ocean from Karachi to the Bay of Guattar giving a coastland of more than three hundred miles. The acquisition of these

* The only gap in the range of mountains to the west of Afghanistan is near Herat.

vast regions by a great European Power had the effect of (1) finally shutting off Afghanistan from access to the Sea, (2) enveloping that country on the southern borders, and (3) making Persia a neighbour of India. We mention these facts here as they are likely to have far-reaching results in the future relations of England, Afghanistan and Persia, specially as both the latter countries are fast awakening to new national aspirations which will before long claim satisfaction.

III.

We are now approaching the time when certain religious and cultural influences which had been at work in Persia began to produce their inevitable results. Among the new liberalising forces, the earliest, if not also the most powerful, was the Babi movement. Like the Brahma Samaj of India, it was a protest against the traditional forms and conventions of the current faith. Its direct appeal to the reason and conscience of mankind antagonised the orthodox Muslims.

The founder and thousands of his followers were persecuted to death and, in less than half a century, *Babism* became the religion of the *elite* of Persia.

Another and a totally different kind of force was the personality of a remarkable man, Sayyad Jamal-ud-Din, whom no less an authority than E. G. Browne* regards as one of the originators of the nationalist movements in Egypt, Turkey and Persia. Browne calls him "the protagonist of Pan-Islamism", but he takes pains to explain that the purely doctrinal aspects of Islam had no attractions for him, and that above everything, he was a "politician" loved by his "admirers as a great patriot" and dreaded by his "antagonists

* See *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* by E. G. Browne, Professor of Persian at the University of Cambridge.

We have seen some references which would show that Sayyad Jamal-ud-Din was a Babi, but Browne is strongly opposed to this view.

as a dangerous agitator". For him Pan-Islamism had very much the same significance as Pan-Germanism or Pan-Slavism. His great ambition was to bring about the "unity and freedom of Muslim peoples" and towards this movement "none played so conspicuous a role as Sayyad Jamal-ud-Din." Quoting from his biography in *Mashahiru' sh Sharq* (Celebrities of the East), Browne gives a summary of his "political aspirations" in the following words :—

"The goal towards which all his actions were directed and the pivot on which all his hopes turned was the unanimity of Islam and the bringing together of all Muslims in all parts of the world into one Islamic Empire under the Supreme Caliph. In this endeavour he spent all his energies and for this end he abandoned all worldly ambitions, taking to himself no wife and adopting no profession". Browne describes him as "a man of enormous force of character, prodigious learning, untir-

ing activity, dauntless courage, extraordinary eloquence, both in speech and writing, and an appearance equally striking and majestic". Politically, he was a constitutionalist and was consumed with a passion for popular government in Shia and Sunni countries alike. His preachings caused a ferment all over Persia the intensity of which can well be imagined. People of all classes were attracted in shoals to his discourses and hung upon his words. During his last visit to Persia at the request of Shah Nasir-ud-Din (September 1881), he became so popular that the Shah began to fear him and had him deported under humiliating circumstances.

IV

A circumstance which made an important, though indirect, contribution to the awakening of Persia may specially be mentioned here. The fact that Persia lay on the direct land route to India led to a British Telegraph line being constructed through it in 1864, followed,

six years later, by the Indo-European double line from London through Germany and Russia to Tabriz. These and other lines, which were laid in due course of time, broke down the barriers of isolation and brought Persia into an intimate contact with the outside world. The influx of foreign influences was further quickened by the large economic concessions which Persia was soon persuaded to grant to European speculators and financiers. Christian missionaries followed. Foreign schools, colleges and hospitals sprang up. The Shah and his nobles travelled abroad. Persian youths were attracted to European seats of learning and, on their return home, became centres of new thoughts and ideals. One breach after another was made in the old world culture and conservatism of Persia.

**A History of Persia* by Lt.-Col. P. M. Sykes, Macmillian & Co., 1915, Vol II, page 475-80.

***The Strangling of Persia* by W. M. Shuster (T. Fisher Unwin, London) 1912, page 273.

In 1872, the Shah granted to Baron Julius de Reuter, a naturalised British subject, "a gigantic monopoly through which were to be effected the construction of railways, the working of mines and the establishment of a national Bank. In return, the customs and all the resources of the Empire were to be pledged." As was to be expected, Russia was indignant at the 'mortgage' of Persia to England. Public opinion in Persia, for whatever it was worth, was also against the monopoly. The concession was eventually withdrawn, but, as a compensation, Baron Reuter was granted in 1889 the right to found a Bank and to issue bank-notes. He was also given the concession to exploit "the mineral resources of Persia with the exception of precious stones, gold and silver." With a view to effectuate these privileges, the Imperial Bank of Persia soon came into existence as an auxiliary in the commercial and mineral exploitation of the country which followed. The

extensive oil wells of Persia represent only one of the numerous enterprises resulting from Baron Reuter's second concession.

The concession to Baron Reuter was only the forerunner of a host of monopolies of various kinds granted to foreigners. As W. M. Shuster writing in 1912 points out, for a whole generation, Persia was the victim of merciless foreign exploitation. "Her hands had been tied," he says, "by treaties and stipulations, by loan contracts, concessions and agreements, all signed by vicious and selfish rulers or ministers, that they might indulge in debauches abroad at the expense of their people and their national safety." A little further on in the same book, he writes: "Starting with the famous tobacco monopoly of 1891, railroad grants, oil and mining concessions and loans have followed in quick succession. If Persia seeks to develop herself, some decree of a former Shah is produced to show why she cannot do so. Claims to unknown mill-

ions are filed against her." There was a race between England and Russia as to which country was able to extort more valuable concessions and thus extend its economic and political influence quicker and more effectually in Persia. In this respect Russia certainly carried the palm.

V

One of the earliest and, doubtless, the most hated of the foreign monopolies was the grant to an Englishman of the right of "full control over the production, sale and export of all tobacco" raised in Persia. In return for this privilege, the Shah was to receive an annual payment of £ 15,000 together with one-fourth of the actual profits of the concern. According to Shuster, the expected profits were calculated to be about 77 per cent on the invested capital. The bargain was financially good for both parties, but the Persians are inveterate smokers, and in addition to the increased cost of an article of common

use by both men and women, they were upset over the harassing restrictions which the monopoly was expected to impose upon their every day life by the servants and informers of the Tobacco Corporation.

The people soon worked themselves up into a sort of religious frenzy. A purely eastern method of seeking relief of an economic grievance was adopted. The Asiatic sets much store by the mortification of the flesh. Whenever he finds himself in trouble, he instinctively seeks moral and spiritual strength to face the evil by imposing a self-denying ordinance upon himself. There is no better or more effective way of humiliating an oriental ruler than that his subjects should voluntarily undergo some suffering or privation. In the present case, under the leadership of a priest, Haji Mirza Hasan of Shiraz, the people took a vow of self-abnegation. "Suddenly, with perfect accord, all the tobacco merchants have closed their shops,

all the galyans (water smoking pipes) have been put aside, and no one smokes any longer, either in the city or in the Shah's *entourage* or even in the women's apartments"* Some riots attended with loss of life also took place. The placards of the Tobacco Corporation were torn down and replaced by revolutionary proclamations. Eventually, the Shah withdrew the concession, December 28, 1891. The *concessionnaires* were compensated by cash payment of £ 500,000 which the Shah had to borrow from the Imperial Bank at 6 per cent. or an annual recurring expenditure of £ 30,000 on account of interest alone. The loan was obtained on the guarantee of the Customs of the Persian Gulf, and was repayable within forty years.

Worse still remains to be told. Shah Nasir-ud-Din had squandered the revenues of Persia

*Dr. Fenvrier in the *London Times*, April 1, 1891, quoted by Prof. E. G. Browne in his book *The Persian Revolution* ", page 52.

on his European trips, but so far there was no national debt. On May 1, 1896, he was shot dead by a disciple of Sayyad Jamal-ud-Din. It is believed that the motive for the assassination was not unconnected with the late Shah's policy of bartering away the natural wealth of the country to foreigners and the consequent political and economic subjection of Persia to European imperialism. As Prof. Browne points out, Jamal-ud-Din never spared any "Muhammadan potentate who encourages or acquiesces in the extension of western influence in his domains".*

The new Shah, Muzaffar-ud-Din, had not been long on the throne when he began to feel the need for foreign loans for his European travels. After one or two failures, he was able, in January 1900, to obtain a loan of

* Extract from an article by Prof. Browne in the New Review for June 1896, written shortly after the assassination of the Shah and quoted by him in his book *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*", page 97.

£ 2,400,000 from Russia at 5 per cent interest on the security of all his customs receipts with the exception of those for Fars and the Persian Gulf. The debt was made repayable within seventy-five years. It was also stipulated that part of the loan would be used for liquidating the smaller loan, at 6 per cent, which his predecessor had obtained from the Imperial Bank to settle up the claim of the British Tobacco Corporation. Most of this money was wasted on trips to Europe.

The huge Russian loan was most unpopular with the people. Along with certain other measures, it gave rise to grave discontent culminating in riots. A couple of years later, 1902, the Shah contracted another and a bigger loan from Russia, the larger portion of which he squandered on his European travels. Mixed with protests against the ruinous and despotic methods of administration, voices demanding a constitution were now heard for the first time. It must be said to the credit of the ecclesiastical

elements in Persia that some of the most prominent among the Muslim clergy joined in the demand, which became louder, and more insistent as time went on. The public meetings and demonstrations were duly punctuated with occasional popular disturbances in various parts of the country.

In the middle of the year 1906, about 16,000 people of Teheran took refuge in the compound of the British Legation as a protest against the tyrannical rule of the Shah. In Persia the *bast* (taking refuge in a sanctuary) is a time-honoured method of popular demonstration against royal wrongs. No Persian monarch may touch the people so long as they choose to remain under the protection of a sanctuary. The king feels humiliated and, so far as may be possible, yields to the wishes of his subjects. In the present case, with the persuation of the British authorities, the Shah climbed down, and after some further trouble, including a second *bast*,

he granted a constitution. It is worthy of note that the clergy in Persia played an important part in securing the constitution from the Shah. Muzaffar-ud-Din was very ill at the time, and the Mullahs begged him not to fail in earning the merit of which he stood in special need at the threshold of his entry into the next world.

By the constitution, the people obtained the right to elect a *Majlis*, or National Parliament, having a voice in the selection of the ministers and the framing of laws. The ministers were to be nominated by the Shah, but they were made responsible to the *Majlis*. Further, without the assent of the *Majlis*, no tax could be imposed, no expenditure incurred and no foreign concession granted.

The royal seal was put on the constitution on December 30, 1906. Two days later, January 1, 1907, it was taken to the House of Parliament through crowds which thronged all the approaches to it. Many among

the spectators were so overcome with emotion that they "wept with joy as they exchanged embraces." Commemorative poems were recited, "the city was illuminated for two successive nights and gratitude reigned supreme."

VII.

A week later, the Shah passed away and was succeeded by his son, Mohammad Ali Mirza. From the very beginning, the new Shah looked upon the constitution with suspicion and dislike; it stood in the way of his exercising autocratic power. He openly slighted the deputies by issuing no invitations to them for his coronation. Worse still, the Ministers refused to appear in the *Majlis* to answer interpellations by the deputies. The deputies, on their part, had no intention to extinguish themselves. An opportunity soon presented itself when they could make their presence felt. The Shah and his advisors had arranged for a loan of £ 400,000 in equal

moieties from Russia and England. The *Majlis* refused to sanction the transactions. The decision was fully supported by the *Mullahs* who denounced the loan as "the final sale of Persia's independence."

Such conflicts between the *Majlis* and the ruling classes became more and more frequent and bitter. For months together many parts of the country were in a disturbed condition. On August 31, that is, the day the Anglo-Russian Convention was signed at St. Petersburg, the Prime Minister with whose advice and assistance the two Russian loans of 1900 and 1902 had been contracted, was assassinated. A little Civil War, and an incursion by the Turkish troops and another by the Russians greatly added to the commotion. The discovery of a secret society, *the Fidais,* (*the devoted*)—one of whose members had shot the Prime Minister dead—increased the alarm. The Shah vacillated between swearing fidelity to the constitution and contemptuously violat-

ing it. The *Majlis* created a large body of "National Volunteers", composed mostly of students and other youngmen. In December 1907, the Shah made a serious but abortive attempt to destroy the *Majlis* with the help of a contingent of mercenary troops, the Cossack Brigade, which had been brought into existence several years before. From this time the relations between the Shah and the popular party, as represented by the *Majlis*, were very strained, inspite of attempts at reconciliation. The newspapers vehemently denounced the Shah and his reactionary Court. The popular orators were no less outspoken. The Shah and his advisors, on their part, determined to seize all power by an armed *coup detat* and once for all destroy the constitution. The people realising the danger demanded the deposition of the Shah. On June 3, 1908, the Shah took up his residence outside the capital and forthwith began to "collect troops, arms and munitions".

He "seized the telegraph offices thereby cutting off communications between the *Majlis* and the provinces, appointed well-known reactionaries to Government posts held by constitutionalists, made a number of prisoners, declared martial law in the city, and placed the Russian Colonel Liakhoff in supreme command". Some of the bigger towns sent contingents of volunteers to Teheran for the support and defence of the *Majlis.* A regular battle went on between the constitutionalists and the Shah's troops round about the *Majlis* buildings, (June 23, 1908). The buildings were bombarded and badly damaged. Many constitutionalists were killed while others were arrested, put in chains and imprisoned. Some were strangled to death.

For a time it appeared as if the constitution was at an end. Riots broke out in several towns in Northern Persia against the high-handedness of the Shah. The nationalists were particularly powerful at Tabriz. They

drove out the royalists from the city and publicly proclaimed the deposition of Muhammad Ali Shah. At the same time, they despatched a force of 300 horsemen to the capital to support the *Majlis* and the constitution, if necessary. The Shah too sent a contingent of his Cossack brigade with some artillery under Russian officers to Tabriz to reduce the rebellious elements there to subjection. For months a state of seige lasted, the Royal troops having invested the city and established a complete blockade of it. Several other towns also kept up the unequal struggle. Their persistence was rewarded and, by and by, some of the Shah's commanders also began to join the nationalist cause.

The year 1909 found the nationalists in very severe straits. In Tabriz many were "dying from hunger or barely subsisting on grass". But they did not lose heart. Towards the end of April, the Russian Government, with the consent of the British Foreign Office, intervened

by sending troops to Tabriz and, somewhat later, also to Teheran in support of the Shah. In the conflicts which took place the nationalist cause triumphed, though the odds were everywhere tremendously against them. On July 16, the Shah losing all hope of maintaining his position took refuge in the Russian Legation outside of Teheran. The same evening, he was formally deposed and his minor son, Sultan Ahmad Shah, was proclaimed his successor. The *ex*-Shah left the Persian soil on October 1, a decent pension being sanctioned for him by the revived *Majlis*. After sometime he made an attempt to regain the throne but it proved abortive. The revolution came to an end and a constitutional Government was finally established in Persia, but the *Majlis* had yet to struggle through years of financial difficulties, confusion and anarchy. These were partly a heritage from the previous rulers and partly due to the "spheres of influence" which had been forced upon a weak country by the Anglo-Russian Convention.

VIII

We may fitly close this chapter with a brief account of the Anglo-Russian Convention to which reference has just been made. In 1907, when the agreement was signed, Russia was in a chastened mood. She had been humbled, but not crippled, by the recent war with Japan. Within her own dominions, new democratic forces had been awakened and were claiming recognition. In Central Asia she had lately been extending her influence in Persia. North of Afghanistan she had swallowed up one chiefship after another, so that at one point, near Gilgit, her boundaries almost touched Kashmir. Her railway terminus at Kush was only about seventy miles from Herat. There were, doubtless, not wanting those who said that Russia was bent upon the acquisition of a port on the Persian Gulf. They pointed to some legendary will of Peter the Great that, without an ice-free harbour, Russia could never become

a prosperous country. Anyway, without being Russo-phobists, it was not difficult to see that, during the first two or three years of the present century, Russia had secured a strangle-hold on Persia. By accommodating the new feeble monarch, Muzzafar-ud-Din, with two huge loans, practically all the customs, with the exception of those for the Persian Gulf, had been mortgaged to her. Her trade in those regions was in consequence thriving and extending.

Another but, as yet, a distant danger to India was the German concession recently granted by Turkey for the construction of the Baghdad Railway. England was alarmed. Lord Curzon paid a visit to the Persian Gulf to study the question how best to counteract the increasing influence of rival European Powers in Persia. He was the first Indian viceroy to visit Persia and, doubtless, the best fitted by his previous studies and travels for his self-imposed task. Lord Curzon appoint-

ed a Resident to watch the affairs in Southern Persia and, at the same time, to extend British trade and influence in Seistan and Eastern Persia in general. He also pushed on the Baluchistan railway line from Quetta to Nushki, a distance of about seventy miles. This line skirts the southern boundary of Afghanistan, and thus covers the flank of that country. It is of greater importance politically than as a trade route to Seistan and Central Asia.

The conditions were now favourable for arriving at an understanding with Russia. The rise of a new great naval Power in the East, and even more so the fear of serious complications in Europe, stimulated the desire on the part of England to avoid entanglements in Asia as much as possible. It is true that, with the strengthening of the north-west frontiers of India and the settlement of the Durand line, followed by the construction of military roads, the preparation of maps and

the acquisition of strategical positions along the borders from Chitral to Baluchistan, the direct menace to India had considerably diminished. Such at least was the view of the ascendant school of frontier policy. But it was feared that, instead of crossing Afghanistan, Russia might work her way southwards and invade India through Baluchistan.

The negotiations for an understanding between England and Russia seem to have commenced soon after the defeat of Russia by Japan, but an agreement was not reached before two years had passed. The Anglo-Russian convention was signed at St. Petersburg on August 31, 1907. While recognising the integrity and independence of Persia, it defined the interests of the contracting parties in Persia, and to much smaller extent in Afghanistan and Tibet, though none of these countries was consulted. South-Eastern Persia was declared to be within the sphere of influence of England alone, while northern

Persia, containing the capital and most of the other populous towns, was similarly left to Russia to exploit as she pleased. A small central zone was neutralised so as to minimise, as much as posssible, the chances of friction and conflict between the two great Powers.

As we know, Persia was at this time in the throes of a revolution. The news that her two powerful neighbours had already decided upon a virtual partition of their country between themselves came as a great shock to the nationalists. They had reason to be grateful to England for sympathy and support in winning the constitution from the late Shah, and against her, therefore, their disappointment was all the keener. They could not be expected to understand that the real significance of the Convention lay in the conditions which existed at this time in the Foreign Offices of Europe. Europe was torn by international rivalries, and it was a matter

of life and death to England, as also to other Great Powers, to make as many friends as possible. Russia was the last ally whom British diplomacy succeeded in winning over to her side, before the cataclysm came and bathed Europe in blood, and with it some other parts of the world also.

As regards Tibet, the Convention recognised the permanent influence of China over the land of the Lamas, while in Afghanistan Great Britain disclaimed any intention to do more than exercise a general control over her foreign relations. Russia acknowledged this exceptional position for England, provided both the Powers enjoyed equal facilities and privileges for trade with the country. Great Britain further stipulated that this part of the agreement was to be enforced only after the Amir had been persuaded to give his assent to the arrangement. As a matter of fact, not only did Habibullah refuse to be a party to the Convention, he expressed his irritation over

such an agreement having been arrived at without his knowledge and consent. So far as is known no heed was paid to his protests.

It need hardly be added that the effect of the Convention on the Muslim world was most unfortunate. In India, the Muslim public opinion expressed itself bitterly against it. The British press, on the other hand, regarded it as a triumph of statesmanship, only regretting that Russia had received the lion's share in the division of the Persian spoils.

CHAPTER III.

I

Before us lie, side by side, the maps of the Turkish Empire as it existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century and as it emerged from the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. What a change have these hundred odd years witnessed? The Great War which followed, and which was not unconnected with the readjustments of Turkish territories in the Balkan regions as well as in North Africa, shook the Ottoman empire to its foundations. It is not too much to say that, had it not been for the wonderful organising capacity, military skill and determination of Mustapha Kamal Pasha, not only would the Turks have been driven, bag and baggage, from Europe, they would have henceforth lived in Asia itself, as an independent people, on sufferance.

The history of the Turkish Empire during the past hundred and twenty-five years is a record of continuous disintegration, and if the process of dissolution has not been uniformly rapid throughout, it was only because of rivalries among those who were casting greedy eyes on the heritage of the "Sick man of Europe".

Historians sometimes divide this period into three stages. During the first stage, ending roughly with the year 1830, the nationalist aspirations of the heterogeneous subject races inhabiting the Balkan peninsula were fully awakened. Under the stimulus probably of the doctrines of the French Revolution, the spirit of revolt was abroad. In 1804, the Serbians rose against their Turkish rulers. In 1812, Russia helped herself with the whole of Bessarbia. Five years later Serbia became an autonomous state, though it was not till 1829 that it was able to establish its virtual independence under the nominal suzerainty of Russia. In 1809, the Ionion islands

seceded from Turkey and became a British protectorate.

Some years later, Greece in the south and Wallachia and Moldavia in the north were also seething with unrest. In all these provinces, the popular discontent was essentially national, though the Turkish misrule was also largely responsible for it. Helped by the English, French and Russian squadrons, Greece declared its independence in 1827, while Moldavia and Wallachia came under the protection of Russia. The two latter principalities subsequently joined together to form the present kingdom of Roumania. On the African shore, France conquered and annexed the big Turkish province of Algeria, 1830.

II

The second stage, from 1830 to 1870, was "a period of revolutionary stagnation, of attempted administrative reform and of constant intervention on the part of the Great Powers". It will be outside our province even to refer to

the frequent political intrigues and nationalist outbursts of this time, but two events are of such outstanding importance as to claim our attention. The first of them was the war in Crimea. The best and briefest characterisation of the war was given by John Bright when he wittily called it "a crime". It was a war of aggression inspired by lust for power. The blame for the war must by apportioned equally between Russia and England and on both it inflicted terrible losses and sufferings. In the end, the integrity of Turkey was recognised by the Great Powers, which means that they took her under their own protection. At the same time, Turkey declared her intention to carry out certain reforms. The Christians and Muslims were placed on the same legal footing. Christians were to be admitted to all military and civil offices in the service of the State. The poll tax levied from them was to be abolished. They were to enjoy equal rights with their Muslim fellow subjects for

representation in the Provincial Council. The "reforms", however, proved to be no more than pious wishes.

The second event was the formation of a party of reform in the system of administration. Midhet Pasha who had distinguished himself as governor of Baghdad and of Bulgaria was the brain of the new movement. With him were associated a number of patriotic soldiers and politicians who were convinced that the very life of Turkey was in danger unless the nationalist aspirations of the various subject races were satisfied by timely changes in the constitution of the country. Unfortunately, nationalist risings in the out-lying provinces of the Empire combined with the vacillating policy of the new Sultan, Abdul Hamid, led to a war with Russia. Midhet Pasha incurred the displeasure of his autocratic master. He was imprisoned, and, inspite of the intervention of the British Government, secretly strangled to death in

1882. The Reform movement of Midhet Pasha was the parent of the Committee of Union and Progress, popularly known as the Young Turks Party, which appeared on the scene in 1908, deposed Abdul Hamid and established constitutional Government in Turkey.

III.

We now come to the third and the really important stage when, following the serious nationalist eruptions in the Balkan peninsula and the horrible massacres of both Muslims and Christians, Russia declared war on Turkey on 24th April 1877. With the details of the war we are not concerned here. It is enough to say that, inspite of the heroic defence of Osman Pasha at Plevna for several months, the Turks could not withstand Russian advance.

On January 20, 1878, Adrianople fell to the Russian arms. Encouraged by the Turkish reverses, there were risings in Crete, Epirus, Thessaly and Macedonia. On 2nd

February 1878, the Greek Government announced its decision to occupy provisionally with its army the Greek provinces of Turkey", But the signing of an armistice a couple of days later, combined with the assurance given to the Greeks by the great Powers that their claims would be considered, put an end to their ambitious designs.

The Treaty of San Stefano, March , 1879, was a terrible blow to Turkey. It created Bulgaria into a big autonomous State whose boundaries extended as far south as the Aegean coast. Bosnia—Herzegovina also became autonomous, while Serbia and Montenegro were considerably enlarged at her expense. Both were to become independent States, as also the newly created principality of Roumania. Reformed administration was promised to the remaining Balkan provinces. Russia received back Bessarbia, besides the districts of Kars Batum and Ardahan. These arrangements, however, did not suit Austria, as the new

principality of Bulgaria blocked "the Hapsburg road to Salonica". At the same time, England could not brook the establishment of "a dominant Slave State in the Balkans", as, it was bound to prove "a mere Russian dependency". Moreover, the dismemberment of European Turkey at this time could only help the designs of Russia as against England. Lord Beaconsfield, therefore, proposed revision of the treaty of San Stefano, but to this Russia was unwilling to assent. War between England and Russia seemed to be imminent. Indian troops were summoned to Malta and other war preparations were set on foot. Seeing that Great Britain was in earnest, the Czar gave way and the war was averted.

The final settlement was made by the Great Powers at the Berlin Congress, June 1878, under the presidency of Prince Bismarck. The Powers which were most interested, each in increasing its own influence, or preventing its rivals from doing so, were Russia, Germany,

Austria and England. France was represent-ed, but she contented herself with the promise of being allowed to annex Tunis, which Italy was also coveting. Italy had only lately come to her own and was yet too weak to do more than merely cast longing looks on other people's possessions. Bismarck's diplomacy was directed towards the creation of small States in the Balkans, which should look to Austria-Germany for support, or at least not join hands with Russia. With this object in view, he succeeded in getting the Congress to consent to the formation of a small Bulgar State, separated from their Slave co-nationals of Russia by the new independent province of Roumania, and from Greece by the new pro-vince of Rumelia under the Sultan. Serbia became an independent State, while Bosnia-Herzegovina were absorbed in Austria. By enormously increasing the power and influence of Asutria, Bismarck laid the foundations of a united and powerful Central European mili-

tary State, which henceforth dominated the Balkans and, directly or indirectly, led to various combinations and alliances precipitating the world catastrophe. Beaconsfield and Salisbury, who represented England at the Congress, exerted all their influence towards the continuance of Turkey as an independent European State. But for their exertions on her behalf—doubtless in England's own vital interests—Turkey would have disappeared from the map of Europe. As the result of a private arrangement with Turkey, England also took Cyprus occupying a strategical position in the eastern Mediterranean, under her own protection. The worst to play her excellent cards was Russia. She lost most of the fruits of her victories in the field. Indeed, with the exception of Kars and Batum, which she obtained in Asia Minor in part payment of war indemnity, she secured no territorial ad-

vantages from the struggle which had cost her so heavily in men and money.*

IV

Pan-Islamism: The reign of Abdul Hamid is a study in the art of administrative obstruction. Both by education and surroundings, the new Sultan was extremely conservative, suspicious and timid. Some think that his conservatism was merely a pose assumed with the object of calling upon the faithful to enlist beneath the banner of the Crescent against the aggressive imperialism which now threatened the Turkish Empire. If so, he kept up the pose to the end and made good use of it in his Pan-Islamic propaganda. In this connection, it is worthy of note that, the Hamidian Pan-Islamism was essentially different from that of Sayyad Jamal-ud-Din or the Egyptian nationalists of this time. The dominant note in the former

*An interesting feature of the Berlin Congress was that all the important decisions made there had been agreed upon secretly among the powers most concerned before the Congress was held.

was an appeal to the deep seated religious sentiment of Muslims all the world over to rally to the moral and material support of the Caliph and Constantinople. On the other hand, as has already been explained, the movement inaugurated by Jamal-ud-Din was at bottom nationalist and democratic in character so far as the constituent States were concerned, the Pan-Islamic setting serving merely as their common bond of *political union* in the central figure of the Caliph. To this end, Jamal-ud-Din endeavoured to soften down as much as possible the sharp lines of doctrinal antagonism existing between the two great sections of Islam by bringing both the *Sunni* and *Shia* kingdoms within the nexus of his ambitious project. It is, of course, not to be understood that the two types of Pan-Islamism were always clearly differentiated in the minds of many leaders of Islam. The objective of both the movements was the political solidarity of Islam as a great power and not, primarily, the

advancement of the religion of the Prophet. Both were defensive rather than offensive or aggressive. This will account for the fact that, although Jamal-ud-Din was a deadly enemy of autocracy, the fear of the growing western imperialism drove him into the arms of the Sultan—Caliph whose rule he hated from the bottom of his heart. On his own part, Abdul Hamid was equally anxious to secure his powerful support and co-operation. No wonder that, as far back as the early eighties, when the Sultan was elaborating his plans of extensive Pan-Islamic propaganda, he placed Jamal ud-Din at the head of his central organisation or bureau at Constantinople from which "there went forth swarms of picked emissaries bearing to the most distant parts of Islam the Caliph's message of hope and impending deliverance from the menace of infidel rulers.*"

**The New World of Islam* by Lathrop Stoddard (Chapman and Hall, London, 1921), page 55.

How well this propaganda was organised and carried out may be seen from the fact that, during the eighteen eighties and nineties, the whole Islamic world was deeply stirred by a strong revival which expressed itself in various shapes and forms. In the heart of Africa, great missionary zeal was displayed and large negro populations were brought into the Islamic fold. At the same time, the Mahdi movement spread like wild fire in the upper basin of the Nile, and inflamed the militant fanaticism which led thousands of the dervishes to rush forward upon the British guns and bayonets in the Sudan. Farther east, in Algeria and other parts of northern Africa, the monastic order of the El Sennusi, although openly hostile both to the Mahdi and the Caliph, was moved to greater religions austerities and exhibition of fanaticism than was the case before. So profound is the influence exerted by the El Sennusi on his followers that, at the present time, the whole

of northern Africa may be said to be under his "occult government'' with which the "various European colonial authorities" avoid conflict as much as possible. It is said that Abdul Hamid's messengers visited all the Islamic lands in Asia and achieved a considerable measure of success. In India their propaganda was probably facilitated by the Turkophil attitude of the British Government. While speaking about this subject, we may also hazard the speculation that the sudden change which the great Muslim leader in India, Syed Ahmad Khan, exhibited about this time from a rationalist in religion and an ardent constitutionalist in politics to a communal Pan-Islamist may possibly have been influenced by the Pan-Islamic wave which was sweeping over Asia during the two closing decades of the last century. In the extreme east of Asia also, Muslim missionaries had been active,

Like the Wahabis of Arabia, the Derivshes were Puritans and had all the fanaticism of new converts.

though they had not met with much success there. But after the victory of Japan over Russia special attempts were made to win over the subjects of the Mikado to the Islamic faith. Says Stoddard whom we have already quoted.—"Efforts to get into touch with Japan were made, propogandist papers were founded, missionaries were selected and the Sultan sent a warship to Japan with a Pan-Islamic delegation aboard." It need hardly be added that Japan received Abdul Hamid's emissaries with "smiling courtesy" without the slightest intention of listening to the enthusiastic pleadings addressed to her.

It is said that the main object Abdul Hamid had in view in building the Hedjaz Railway was the propagation of Pan-Islamic feeling and sentiment the world over. There can be no doubt that the carrying out of the project raised the Sultan in the religious regard of the faithful and immensely increased his prestige as Caliph of Islam. In 1900, a

world wide appeal was issued for funds to construct a Railway line from Damascus to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. By 1904, more than a crore of rupees was collected. Barring a compulsory ten per cent tax levied on the salaries of the civil and military officials in the pay of the Turkish Empire, the whole amount represented voluntary contributions which came from every part of the earth. The contribution of Indian Mussalmans is said to have amounted to about a tenth of the total expenditure. In July 1908, when the Young Turks revolution took place, the line had been completed upto Medina.

V

The Turkish Empire under Abdul Hamid :— We must now go back to the time of the Berlin Congress and resume our story of the continued disruption of the Turkish Empire. We have seen that with all his exertions, Beaconsfield did not succeed in preventing large territorial losses to Turkey in Europe. One

*The World of Islam by Lathrop Stoddard, page 59.

writer estimates that, as a consequence of the Berlin decisions, about fourth-fifths of the Turkish territory in the Balkan regions together with a population of about eight million persons passed out of the Sultan's domination.

Indirectly, two other facts of great moment may also be associated with the Berlin deliberations. The first is the clear emergence of the principle of nationality by the creation, on a racial basis, of several new autonomous or independent States in Eastern Europe. The second fact is the convergence of fresh vital interests of all the Great Powers within the limits of a narrow area. In these circumstances. frequent conflicts, actual or potential, became inevitable and quite naturally led to the grouping and re-grouping of the Powers into hostile camps. In plain words, the seeds of the Great War of 1914 were sown in 1878.

As we have already seen, Tunis was promised to France as her share of the Turkish spoils distributed at Berlin. Early in April

1881, the stage was set to give an appearance of plausibility to the occupation of the outlying Turkish provinces. The French Government sent an expedition against certain tribes living on the frontier of Algeria. The Bey of Tunis was assured that there was no intention of annexing his territory, but that "for purely strategic principles," the occupation of a limited portion of the province, *viz.*, the valley of the Madjider, was "absolutely necessary." The Bey protested. On May 12, the French Consul and General Breard entered the palace and demanded signature to a treaty making Tunis a French protectorate. The Bey declined to look at the document, whereupon the French Consul is reported to have read it aloud and then forced the Bey to put his signature to it.

England was compensated by the "temporary occupation" of Egypt. There was a nationalist upheavel in Egypt. France and England joined hands in demanding international financial control over the country.

Khedive Ismail who was in sympathy with the national aspirations of the people was deposed at the suggestion of England and France, June 1879), and, in his place, his son Tewfiq was put on the throne. The new Khedive was so subservient to the foreign influences that the nationalists rebelled against him under the leadership of Arabi Pasha. On September 9, 1881, Arabi appeared before the Khedive's palace accompanied by a large force, and demanded a constitutional government to be formed for Egypt. The nationalists also wanted to reorganise the army on more modern lines and with increased troops. France and England, the two Powers which possessed the largest interests in the land of the Pharaohs, were alarmed at this sudden outburst of nationalist feelings. They presented a joint note to the Khedive followed by a naval demonstration off Alexandria. This only served to irritate the nationalists. On June 11, riots broke out in Alexandria and fifty

Europeans were killed by the mobs. England invited France to co-operate but without success. Nor could the Sultan of Turkey be moved to send an army. England then decided to act alone. An expedition was sent to Egypt. On July 11, Alexandria was bombarded and the forts destroyed. An army under Sir Garnet Wolseley landed and defeated Arabi at Tel-el-Kebir (September 13), and Egypt became to all intents and purposes a British province under the suzerainty of Turkey. The nationalist awakening in Egypt was suppressed, it was not killed. It is only fair to add that, there were not wanting a few Englishmen who condemned Gladstone for his unwarranted action in Egypt. Indeed, one of his own cabinet members, the venerable John Bright, left the ministry, because the forcible occupation of Egypt involved, as he mentioned in the course of a speech in the House of Commons, "a manifest violation both of international law and of moral law."

In the same year, Turkey ceded to Greece,

as the result of diplomatic pressure from England, the Province of Thessaly and part of Epirus. Three years later, September 1885, by a *coup d'etat* Bulguria and Rumelia re-united into one province with the assent of the Powers. The Sultan bowed before the inevitable and accepted the accomplished fact, only stipulating that the fiction of his suzerainty be kept up by his appointing the ruler of Bulgaria as the Governor of Rumelia also. It was now the turn of the big Island of Crete to rise in rebellion against Turkey, 1896. Crete had made several attempts before to shake off the Turkish yoke. In the present case also she met with no better success. Greece, sympathising with the aspirations of her co-nationals in Crete declared war against Turkey, which responded by overrunning Thessaly and occupying it. It was only through the intervention of the Powers that Thessaly was returned to Greece and the rebellion in Crete subsided, 1897.

Meanwhile troubles arose in Macedonia.

Ever since the San Stefano plan of Big Bulgaria was revived at Berlin, the Macedonians had not known even a few years of unbroken peace and tranquillity. Besides other and smaller communities inhabiting the Province, the Bulgars, the Serbs, and the Greeks, each in turn, contended for its own political supremacy. Under the weak overlordship of Turkey, it was not an easy task to reconcile the rival ambitions of half a dozen races. Conflicts were frequent, some being probably also promoted by the neighbouring more powerful States which were interested in the continuance of disorder and misgovernment. Abdul Hamid, it is said, himself sought to keep up the nationalist conflicts with a view to maintain his own authority over the mutually quarrelling elements. In 1895, a Macedonian Committee was formed with the slogan "Macedonia for the Macedonians" as its motto. Such a programme was bound to favour the Bulgars who were the predominant party in Macedonia, and the

union of the Province with Bulgaria would then be a question of time.

In the winter of 1902-03, the situation became critical. The Sultan appointed Hilmi Pasha "a man universally esteemed and the favourite of the ambassadors" as Inspector-General of Macedonia. Hilmi tried to pacify the disgrunted races by introducing reforms in the administration of the province, but, at every step, he was opposed by Abdul Hamid. Russia and Austria intervened to enforce reforms in the province, but such administrative and judicial changes as were introduced were made ineffectual by the obstructive policy of the Sultan himself. At least some of the European Powers were also not over-anxious that Turkey should set her house in order. Before long, Macedonia became a veritable "pandemonium." Everywhere there were "murders, thefts, attacks upon villages by men of a hostile race; sometime upon no pretext whatever, except, if by Greeks, that the villages were

Bulgarian or *vice versa*; at other times, on the pretext that the villagers had given aid to rival bands."*

Such was the state of things in 1908. In the words of Sir Valentine Chirol, there was "universal discontent" in which the army also shared. At this critical moment when the combined intervention of the European Powers seemed probable, a well organised party of constitutional reform, which had been forming for some years, appeared on the scene.

VI.

This party was no other than the famous Young Turks Party, or, to call it by its original name, the "Committee of Union and Progress." As was to be expected, a number of patriotic Turks who had been watching the course of events in the Turkish Empire, had become disgusted with the tyrannical rule of Abdul Hamid. They had seen nationalist uprisings in one

*Sir Edwin Pearse's *Life of Abdul Hamid*, pp. 279-80 (quoted in the *Turks in Europe* by W. E. D. Allen, page 198).

subject province after another ending in their separation, as a rule, with the support of the Powers. The powerful agitation started by Gladstone, both in the Parliament and outside over the "Bulgarian Horrors" and followed, some years later, by the Armenian massacres, had alienated the sympathies of such of the British statesmen as had till then stood by Turkey. All attempts at administrative reform were neutralised by the indecision, if not the tortuous diplomacy, of Abdul Hamid. Northern Africa had almost completely passed out of the hands of the Sultan. In the Balkans, before their very eyes, new independent provinces had been carved out of the once glorious Ottoman Empire. Macedonia promised to become, and did soon become, the bone of contention for the rival ambitions of Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece, and it was feared that the day was not far distant when the Great Powers would divide the Turkish Empire among themselves.

As early as 1891, a few Turkish exiles met at Geneva and formed a "Committee of Union and Progress," with the avowed object of modernising the political institutions of the Empire. The reformers, as they delighted to be called, pledged themselves to establish constitutional government throughout Turkey with perfect equality before the law for all subject races. The formula of one of them, Ahmad Riza, who has been called the "brain" of the movement, was—'Oh non-Muslim Ottomans, Oh Muslim Ottomans'. In other words, they wanted to fuse Turks, Arabs, Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbians all into one nation, the Ottoman nation. Riza is reported to have explained the position of his party in the following words:—

"We shall, as statesmen, place the Quran and the Bible on equal footing. But in our reconstitution of the Ottoman Empire, administrative conformity must be absolute. Autonomy is treason; it means separation. Our

Christian compatriots must be Ottomanised citizens. We shall no longer be conquerors and slaves, but a new nation of free men."*

Originally, the Committee consisted of Muslims, but before long a few Christians and Jews were also admitted to it, if only to inspire confidence in the non-Muslim races. It included several members of the Royal family, some of them being exiles from Turkey. By and by, many of the principal members of the party were other than Turks. In the beginning the Young Turks were said to have possessed "a decided leaning towards a certain form of Anglomania." England "the home of liberty, of Parliaments, of popular Government," such were the catchwords of which the new party seemed to be enamoured. Dr. Rohrbach whom we have just quoted writes:—**

* *The Turks in Europe* by W. E. D. Allen (John Murray 1911) page 200.

** *Turkey and the Eastern Question* by Macdonald, page 45 quoted in *The Turks in Europe* by W. E. D. Allen, page 200.

"The Young Turks, liberals of every shade, believed that Germany had been a staunch supporter of Abdul Hamid's tyrannical Government and that German influence constitituted a danger for the era of liberalism."

For a number of years, the C.U.P. contented itself with spreading its propaganda silently from Geneva, Paris and other centres in Europe. Small committees were organised in some of the Balkan countries as also in Anatolia. With a view to carry out a military *coup d'etat*, the Young Turks put themselves into communication with selected officers in the Turkish army whom they succeeded in winning over to their own side. Ahmad Riza started a propagandist organ of the party at Paris, whence it was smuggled into "every garrison of the Empire". In about fifteen years, 1906, the C.U.P. felt itself strong enough to form a Central Committee

Paul Rohrbach in his book *Germany's Isolation*, page 50, quoted in '*Turkey, the Great Powers and the Baghdad Railway*' by E. M. Earle (Macmillan and Sons, New York, 1923), page 218.

at Salonica, which was at that time the Headquarters of the Turkish army in Europe. In the summer of 1908, certain events forced the Young Turks to come out into the open and face the situation as best they could. A speech of the Italian Premier, Signore Fattoni, favouring provincial autonomy in Macedonia and the meeting of King Edward the Seventh and the Russian Emperor at Reval, led them to the conclusion that the European Powers were again contemplating intervention in the affairs of Turkey. On July 23, Enver Bey proclaimed a revolution on behalf of the Committee of Union and Progress at Salonica. At the same time, two army corps under their own officers prepared to march on the capital in support of the Committee's demand. Finding that the new forces were too strong for him, the Sultan yielded. Midhet Pasha's constitution which had been suppressed in 1876, was revived. The censorship of the Press came to an end. The spy system was

abolished. As if overnight, without bloodshed and without any one striking a single blow, Turkey was transformed from an age-long autocracy into a constitutional monarchy.

There was great rejoicing all over Turkey and, indeed, in all Islamic countries. Muslims, Christians. Jews—all fraternised with each other rejoicing in that strange thing, called *freedom*. "Muslims joined in a memorial service for the victims of Armenian massacres." "A Turk was imprisoned for insulting a Christian." "A new chapter seemed to have opened in the history of Turkey. *Ulemas* publically embraced Christian priests. Delegates besought American missionaries to explain to the people how "liberty worked in republican lands". In a fit of ecstacy, cried out Enver Bey "Henceforth we are all brothers. There are no longer Greeks, Jews, Moslems; under the blue sky we are all equal... We glory in the name of being Ottomans".

Preparations began in earnest for holding

a General Election of the new Chamber of Deputies. The constitution provided for 280 members to be chosen on a basis of a uniform franchise óf all male citizens in the Turkish Empire. No distinction was made regarding the creed or nationality for the voters.

On December 10, the first Turkish Parliament met. In opening it in person, the Sultan made a speech in which he promised to stand by the constitution and to protect the sacred rights of his people regardless of race or creed. All seemed to go well for a time.

But only for a time. In fact, both at home and abroad thick clouds had already begun to gather. As we have explained earlier in this chapter, Austria-Hungary had little reason to welcome a constitutional party strong enough to restore order in the "Macedonian cockpit". Towards the end of September or early in October, 1908, Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria and Emperor Francis Joseph met at Buda-Peth. It was an ominous

meeting. On October 5, Bulgaria declared herself completely independent of Turkey. Two days later Austria formally proclaimed the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina which she had till then merely "occupied" under the Berlin Covenant of 1878. Similar emotions were soon roused in Serbia. Not to be behind others, Crete proclaimed herself a province of Greece. Russia too became uneasy and demanded "compensation". Meanwhile Abdul Hamid had not been idle. He was at his old game of intrigue, this time against those who had robbed him of his power and prestige. For the achievement of his purpose, he found ready instruments in the thousands of spies and other hangers on, whom the Committee had, perhaps, a little too hastily dismissed. The policy of fusing the various subject races into a single Ottoman nation was foredoomed to failure. It ran counter to the nationalist aspiration which had now been fully awakened and could not be suppressed.

Such were the forces arrayed against the Young Turks at the very commencement of their coming into power. In all probability, if they had had breathing time, they would have set their house in order. But the much needed respite was denied to them. On April 27th, 1909, they took the bold step of removing Sultan Abdul Hamid from the throne. In the second session of the Turkish Parliament, the "Shadow of God" listened to the *fatwa* of the Sheikh-ul-Islam that he had by his acts forfeited his title to rule over the Faithful. His younger brother, a mere puppet in the hands of the Young Turkish leaders, was proclaimed Sultan-Caliph, but Niazi Bey, Enver Bey and their companions were the real power behind the throne.

CHAPTER IV.

I.

The Young Turks in Power. As we have seen in the preceding chapter, on their accession to power, the leaders of the new constitutional party found themselves beset with difficulties on all sides. The position was, we think, correctly stated by a recent writer who said that "without troubling themselves about Turkey's chance of regeneration," the European Powers were occupied with their own conflicting interests, "all trying to derive some profit from Turkey in case she should become prosperous and powerful, and at the same time, doing their best to prevent her from reviving in order to be able to domineer over her and exhaust her the more easily." * It is even believed that the abortive counter-revolution of 13th April 1909, was instigated by some of the European Powers "which anxious at seeing

**The Turks and Europe* by Galston Gallard, pp. 16-17.

Turkey attempt to gain a new life, tried to raise internal difficulties by working up the fanaticism of the *hadjas*, most of whom were paid and lodged in seminaries and so were interested in maintaining Abdul Hamid's autocratic Government."* The same writer thinks that "these manœuvres may even have been the original cause of the reactionary movement."

II.

It is worthy of note that, owing to the rapidly growing influence of Germany in Turkey, the Turkophil proclivities of England had of late years received a serious set-back. German interest in the Near East was rather slow in awakening. In 1872, the eminent Railway Engineer, Wilhelm Von Pressel, was commissioned by the Sultan to prepare plans for railway construction across his dominions

* *The Turks and Europe* by Galston Gallard (Thomas Murray and Co., London, 1921) page 15.

in Europe and Asia. He not only built the trans-Balkans lines, but was the first to foresee " the possibility of establishing a great system of Ottoman railways from the border of Austria-Hungary to the shores of the Persian Gulf ", * to the immense economic and political advantage of the empire.

The rich mineral resources of Annatolia were also well-known by this time. But somehow or other even these alluring opportunities and prospects of exploitation failed to attract Germany, so that in the 1870's, we find Bismarck exclaiming with an air of supreme self-satisfaction, "I never take the trouble even to open the mail-bag from Constantinople."

III.

In a few years, however, all this was changed. The erstwhile German attitude of indifference was turned into one of deep concern

**Turkey, the Great Powers and the Baghdad Railway* by E. M. Earle (Macmillian and Co., New York, 1923) page 18.

in the affairs of Turkey. It came about this way. After the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, the Sultan secured the services of the well-known military expert, General Von der Goltz, together with a staff of other officers, for the training and reorganisation of his land forces on the Prussian model. He also picked out large number of Turkish youths and sent them, year after year, to the military colleges in Germany for training as officers of his own army. The military reputation of Germany at this time stood very high. In 1866, she had inflicted a crushing defeat within six weeks on Austria. More brilliant still was her humiliation of France only five years later. Possibly the fact that Gladstone had come into power in 1880, had also something to do with Abdul Hamid's preference for Germany over England. The Liberal statesman's immense pamphleteering campaign in connection with the "Bulgarian Horrors" was too fresh to have been forgotten. Anyway, the Turkish officers

trained in Germany were filled with admiration for every thing German. Meanwhile, Von der Goltz in his reports was drawing attention, and economic advantages of developing the Turkish Empire and specially of connecting the distant provinces in Asia with the capital. Abdul Hamid himself enthusiastically looked forward to the dream of the Engineer Wilhelm Von Pressel being realised. He had given concessions to various European companies to build short Railway lines in different parts of Asia Minor. Among others, in 1888, the Deutsche Bank obtained the right to lay down a short line along the Asiatic shore of the sea of Mormora. Sometime later this line was extended to Angora and, in the course of time, it developed into the ominous Berlin-Baghdad project.

On November 1st, 1889, that is, the year preceding the fall of Bismarck, the Kaiser paid a ceremonial visit to the Sultan. These Royal

visits were repeated. The relations of thet wo sovereigns now became more and more intimate and, on one occasion, in 1898, in a speech at Damascus, the Kaiser rather ostentatiously declared himself as the friend and protector of Mohammadans all the world over. A little earlier he had shown his practical sympathy with Abdul Hamid by observing a discreet silence over the "Armenian massacres" which drew upon the Sultan the united wrath of all the other Christian nations of Europe. The pan-German pride, itself a growth of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, was fed almost to surfeit by the rapid expansion of German trade, investments and political prestige in the Near East.

IV.

Towards the close of 1899,* the Sultan granted the Deutsche Bank the important con-

*The final Royal decree sanctioning the award of the concession was not issued till March 18, 1902.

cession for extending the Anatolian Railway from Konia to Baghdad and thence to the Persian Gulf. France accepted a share in the enterprise, but England was involved at the time in the Boer War and had to decline a similar offer of participation in the scheme. Probably there were also other and more powerful reasons for England's seeming indifference towards the scheme. The relations of the British Foreign Office with Germany were none too cordial, and England was, in consequence, reluctant to go shares with a rival in an enterprise which she might, in her own vital interests, be called upon to oppose and even to destroy.

Whether the Baghdad scheme was conceived from the very beginning as an essential part of the German *weltpolitic*, it is difficult to say. But it is certain that, before long, the political or rather imperial aims of the B. B. B. (Berlin-Byzantium-Baghdad) programme, as German publicists now loved to call it, began

to overshadow the purely commercial or financial aspects of it. Indeed, some politicians even compared it to Disraeli's clever deal in the Suez Canal shares more than thirty years earlier. Within a few years, Germany was as much interested in the Near East as England or Russia. If the latter country did not offer any effective opposition to the project, it was only because she had more pressing work on her hands in the Far East. However, both England and Russia did as much as they could diplomatically to block the progress of the scheme. For one thing, in signing the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, England barred the road to the Persian Gulf effectually against Germany and Russia alike.

V.

Such was the state of things when the revolution of 1908 put the Young Turks in power. Abdul Hamid's policy did not quite fit in with the liberal programme of the new Turkish *regime*. Besides, as we have already seen,

the Young Turks had not held the reins of government for three months, when Austria-Hungary absorbed Bosnia-Herzegovina and, with her support, Bulgaria broke off even the slender connection which had till then bound her to Turkey. It was also known that Italy, another ally of Germany, was intriguing to seize the African province of Tripoly. In the first Turkish Parliament held in the autumn of 1908, prominent members of the Young Turks party, including Djavid Bey, subsequently Finance Member, condemned the Baghdad Railway concession and had it not been a question of honour with them to continue the obligation of the previous Government, they would have repudiated the scheme altogether. More positive evidences of the anti-German and pro-British inclinations of the Young Turks were not wanting.

"In 1909, the Ottoman navy was placed under the virtual command of a British admiral, and British officers continued to exercise comprehensive powers of adminis-

tration over the Turkish ships and yards almost to the declaration of war in 1914. In 1909 also, Sir Ernest Cassel accepted an invitation to establish the National Bank of Turkey for the purpose of promoting more generous investment of British capital in the Ottoman Empire. During the same year, Sir William Willcocks was appointed Consulting Engineer to the Minister of Public Works, and his plans for the irrigation of Mesopotamia were put into immediate operation. Sir Richard Crawford, a British financier, was appointod advisor to the Minister of Finance; a British Barrister was made Inspector-General of the Ministry of Justice; a member of the British Consular Service became Inspector General of the Home Office."* Similar concessions were shown to France which was now an ally of England.

In 1910, both England and France were offered further opportunities for completely weaning the Young Turks from any semblance of German partiality which might still linger in them. In the summer of that year, Djavid Pasha, as Finance Minister, visited both Paris

**Turkey, the Great Powers and the Baghdad Railway* by E. M. Earle. (Macmillian and Co., New York 1923) pages 220-221. It is a pleasure to us or say that no writer we have consulted on this subject has stated the *pros* and *cons* of the Baghdad scheme so fairly as the author of this book has done.

and England to negotiate for a loan of £10,000,000. The Foreign Offices in both countries actually opposed the transaction, and in doing so drove the Turkish leaders into the arms of Germany. The Turks were willing to accommodate England so far as her interests in Mesopotamia were concerned, by internationalising the Baghdad-Basra section of the railway on certain conditions agreeable to the rival parties. Other compromises were also suggested. The Turks wanted to raise their custom duties by 4 per cent but it soon became apparent that "certain European Powers would block the proposal for any increase in Turkish taxes, unless they were granted important compensations of a political and economic character and unless it could determine, in large measure, the purposes for which the additional revenues would be expended."*

**Turkey, the Great Powers and the Baghdad Railway* by E. M. Earle, page 226.

The Turks were incensed. They were loud in their denunciation of the Entente Powers. They were not prepared, they said, to submit to foreign tutelage in their economic programmes and policies. "We tried," wrote Djavid Bey "to better our relations with the English. They talked to us of the Baghdad Railway! We tried to introduce financial and economic reforms in Turkey; we found before us the Baghdad Railway! Every time an occasion arose, the French stirred up the Baghdad Railway question. Even the Russians, notwithstanding the Potsdam agreement, constantly waved in their hands the Baghdad weapon."* On the other

* Quoted by E. M. Earle in *Turkey, the Great Powers and the Baghdad Railway* page 229. (The Potsdom agreement, November 1910, recognised (1) The undisputed Russian sphere of influence under the Anglo-Russian Convention. (2) The German interest in the Baghdad Railway. (3) Russia's right to obtain a concession to build a short line in Northern Persia to be linked with the Baghdad Railway, Germany being free to build this section in case Russia failed. (4) The policy of the economic open door to be observed by both nations.

hand, the Germans adopted a studiously conciliatory attitude. They even expressed their willingness to forego the right to construct the Baghdad-Basra section of the line "including the concessions for post and terminal facilities at Basra." Best of all, the results achieved with the Anatolian and portions of the Baghdad Railway already constructed by the Germans seemed to justify the Turkish leaders' hopes of sustained economic improvement of the country when the whole system was completed.

VI

In the midst of these plans for the economic and political development of the Empire, the Young Turks were suddenly overtaken by calamities abroad followed by even greater calamities at home. Their one need was a long enough respite to set their house in order by carrying out the necessary economic and constitutional reforms

and thus stopping the processes of disintegration that had been going for more than a century. Moreover, the geographical position of Turkey and the training of many of the Turkish leaders in the academic and military institutions of Europe admirably fitted them to serve as the true intermediaries between the East and the West. What a long vista of opportunities for an abiding reconciliation between Asia and Europe was opened out here! But in politics there is no room for after-the-event speculations and reflections. The stern fact is that there was no respite for the Young Turks. Europe was more interested in the collapse of the "sick man" and the division of his patrimony than in his recovery and resuscitation.

The first blow was struck by Italy. It is true, that soon after the Revolution, Austria-Hungary had grabbed two adjoining provinces and Bulgaria had proclaimed her complete independence. But in both cases the overlordship of Turkey had for long years been a mere

fiction. Every body knew it and the change made no great difference in the prestige of the new *regime.* The union of Crete with Greece was doubtless a more serious affair, but here again, the population of Crete was overwhelmingly Greek. The Cretans had made several unsuccessful attempts before throwing off the Turkish yoke. The separation of Crete from the Turkish empire was only a corollary to the independence of Greece more than eighty years earlier. The affront to Turkey consisted more in the manner in which Crete cut herself off from the Empire than in the thing itself.

With Tripoly, on the other hand, the case was quite different. The Province was directly governed by Turkey. The population was mainly Muslim and there was no evidence of nationalist or separatist tendencies on the part of the people themselves. Italy had no valid grievance whatsoever against Turkey. Indeed, even when, towards the end of 1910, some

rumours were heard of Italy's intentions to seize Tripoly, they were at once emphatically repudiated in the Italian Chamber by the Foreign Minister himself. Speaking on December 2, 1910, he said, "We desire the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and we wish Tripoly always to remain Turkish".* Without any thing happening in the interval "to disturb the relations between the two countries", on September 26, 1911, "the Italian Government sprang a mine on the Porte by declaring its intention to occupy Tripoly". An ultimatum was sent demanding the right to make Tripoly an Italian Province "under the suzerainty of the Sultan". A time limit of only forty-eight hours was fixed for a reply. The indignation of the Turks may easily be imagined. But passion is a poor substitute for power to resist. By October 5, most of the coast towns in Tripoly were in the hands of the Italians. If

* *Turkey, the Great Powers and the Baghdad Railway,* by E. M. Earle, page 226.

there ever was a war waged without provocation, the Tripolian war was one". Sir Valentine Chirol calls it "a case of pure aggression". But inspite of the fact that the odds were heavily against them, the Turks fought gallantly and, after a bitter war lasting for more than a year, only gave in, because serious troubles arose nearer home and claimed their immediate attention.

Italy chose her own time for the attack. She sent a force of fifty thousand soldiers fully equipped to seize the province. The Turkish garrison had, unfortunately, been reduced considerably some time before the invasion. The Turkish navy which, in pre-Hamidian days, was reckoned as "the third most powerful in Europe"* had been completely neglected by the Sultan, who remembering the fate of his predecessor, "feared that his guns might be trained on his palace". No wonder the Turkish fleet, such as it was, was soon driven

* *Ibid*, page 359.

into the Dardanelles, leaving the undisputed command of the sea to the enemy. Nor was it easier for the Turks to transport men and munitions of war by land to Tripoly. Strange as it may seem, " the British Government proclaimed the neutrality of Egypt, though it was still tributary to the Porte, and forbade the passage of Turkish troops into Tripoly."* In these circumstances, the Turks could only organise and train the Moorish tribes living in the hinterland. But so well did the Tripolians acquit themselves—thanks to their natural allies, the heat, the sands and the waterless and trackless terrain through which the invaders had to advance—that in sheer desperation and hoping to compel the enemy to come to terms, the Italian navy seized some Turkish Islands in the Mediterranean. Still the Turks held on till the middle of October, when revolts in the Balkans at last left them no alternative but to sign a Peace Treaty with Italy.

Ibid, page 356.

Here reference may also be made to the loss of another outlying province of Turkey in Northern Africa. In the Franco-British agreement, France withdrew her opposition to the British occupation of Egypt and in return obtained England's consent to freedom of action in Morocco. From this moment the fate of this province as a Turkish possession was practically sealed. In 1911, serious complications arose in which a mock exhibition of sword-play was given by Germany, France and England. A European war seemed to be imminent. Eventually Germany climbed down and, early in 1912, Morocco became a French protectorate. With the loss of Tripoly and Morocco the once extensive Turkish dominions were completely blotted out from the map of Africa.

VII

Early in 1912, Albania which still remained Turkish, raised the standard of revolt. The immediate cause was probably an ill-timed

order enforcing conscription on the Muslim and Christian population alike. For the same reason, the congeries of people comprehensively known as the Macedonians—"a perfect ethnographic museum"—also became restive. Partly out of sympathy with their Christian co-nationals in the afflicted province, but mainly with the object of seizing and dividing Macedonia among themselves, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece formed an anti-Turkish alliance. After protracted negotiations and entering into secret compacts among themselves, but without settling the division of the spoils, on August 26, 1912, the covenant of the "Balkan League" was signed. The well-known Greek statesman, Venezelos, was the moving spirit of the League.

The Montenegrins opened the hostilities on October 8 by advancing into Albania, who had meanwhile won a splendid victory over the Turks and become an autonomous State. Soon the Bulgars also moved

forward in great force towards Constantinople. Almost simultaneously the Serbs from the north and the Greeks from the south invaded Macedonia. The beligerent Balkan States had the moral, and possibly also the material support of the European Powers at their back, with the exception of Germany and her ally Austria-Hungary, which still stood by Turkey. Despite the overwhelming forces thus arrayed against them, the Turks themselves and some of their friends were not without hopes of beating the intruders back to their homelands. It was believed that, as in 1897, their training under German military experts would pull them out of the new struggle with added prestige. As it was, the Balkan Wars disclosed and even "advertised" the essential weakness of their position in Europe, if not also of their recent policy of indiscriminate conscription. Without a strong enough navy, they found it impossible to transport sufficient reinforcements from Anatolia to three or four separate

fronts where fighting was going on simultaneously. Besides, the recently conscripted Christian elements in the army proved to be a source of serious weakness in the fighting lines; their sympathies were with the enemies of those under whose banner they were fighting. The commissariat arrangements were also very defective. But inspite of these shortcomings, the Turks gave a good account of themselves and some of the bloodiest battles ever fought in the Balkans were those in which the Bulgar advance towards Constantinople was contested.

It soon proved to be an unequal struggle. By the end of November, Constantinople with the narrow strip of land forming the Gallipoli peninsula, was all that was once "Turkey in Europe". Three other isolated towns were in Turkish "possession", but they were closely besieged, and however stout the resistance, they were sure to fall to the enemy. Of these the most important was Adrianople. On March

28, 1913, it surrendered to the Bulgars with 17,000 men. Janina had capitulated to the Greeks three weeks earlier, while Skutari could hold out only till the 21st April when it succumbed to the Montenegrins.

The fate of Turkey was now sealed once for all. Her defeats caused immense enthusiasm in England, and even the premier, Mr. Asquith, bluntly declared that "the victors are not to be robbed of the fruits which cost them so dear". That was not the language that British and other European statesmen had used sixteen years earlier, when, provoked bv Greece, the Turks overran Thessaly but were soon forced by the Great Powers to forego the results of their victories in the field. In the final settlement, thanks mainly to the daring and determination of Enver, Adrianople was restored to the Turks along with a slice of Thrace. In area, European Turkey was now barely one-sixth of its former self, while its population was a trifle less than one-

third of what it was before the first Balkan War.

With the victors too it was anything but smooth sailing. Dazzled with the enormous spoils, they did not quite know how to divide them. They forgot their old "nationalist principles", and soon the old comrades-in-arms were at the throats of each other, overwhelming the peninsula in what one writer justly calls "*general devilry.*" As we have seen, Bulgaria had borne the brunt of the battles against the Turks. She demanded part of Macedonia, both as the price of her great sacrifices and as the protector of her co-nationals. But the earth-hunger of Serbia and Greece had also been keenly excited. These Christian nations now sought the help of the Turks against Christian Bulgaria. It was thus that Turkey was able to wrest Adrianople from Bulgaria. At the same time Roumania fell upon Bulgaria from behind and forced her to give up a part of Dobruja to her northern neighbour. The Treaty of Bucha rest,

August 20, 1913, finally put an end to the fratricidal Second Balkan War. The two Balkan Wars cost about 35,000 lives. But even worse that these great losses was the perpetuation of deep hatreds which made for not peace but the reverse of it.

VIII

With the exact manner in which the boundaries of the enlarged Balkan States were now drawn, we are not concerned. But it is pertinent to our purpose to refer to two facts which stand out in bold relief. The first is that the new administrative structures were erected upon foundations which were far from stable. The Bulgarian national ambitions were baulked just as they were coming to fruition. This made the biggest partner in the Balkan coalition very sore at heart and filled her with an ill-suppressed feeling of hatred and revenge. As a matter of fact, a movement was set on foot for a union of Turkey with Bulgaria against Greece and Serbia, but the Great

Powers discountenanced it and it collapsed. On the other hand, Serbia and Greece had got more than their share. When their real or imaginary interests clashed, the Balkan races hated each other even more than they hated the Turks. Again, in the lump, the territorial divisions accentuated the coflicting interests of the *Entente* and the Central Powers. If it is true, as we have observed elsewhere, that the seeds of the Great War were sown in 1878, one may say with equal justice that the Balkan Wars did everything that was possible for the seeds to sprout at an early date.

The second fact is equally significant and obvious. At no time before was the Islamic world so convulsed as in 1911-13. "A flood of mingled despair and rage swept over the Muslim world from end to end".*

***The New World of Islam* by Lathrop Stoddard, page 57.

It looked as if a twentieth century revival of the Crusades had taken place. It was so understood in all Europe. The various members of the Balkan League certainly made no secret of it that they had banded themselves together for a life and death struggle between the Cross and the Crescent. Even great statesmen who control the destinies of world empires talked about the Balkan War not in terms of politics and diplomacy but of theology. When on November 9, 1912, the Greeks captured Salonica, which had been a Turkish city for well nigh five conturies,* the whole of Christiandom rejoiced over the event Mr. Asquith, the British Prime Minister, speaking at a Guildhall meeting, referred to Salonica as the "gate through which Christianity had spread to Europe", and he expressed his pleasure that it was once more "in the hands of a Christian Power". The utterances of other equally eminent statesmen like Lloyd George, Winston

*The Turks took it in 1430.

Churchill and Masterman were also pitched in the same denominational key. The effect of these speeches, as of those made a short while before at the time of the Tripolean war on the Muslims in India may well be imagined.

A most serious situation was only saved by the tact and sympathy of Lord Hardinge, assisted by several of his provincial sartaps. The Viceroy paid a subscription to the funds of the Red Crescent Society* which had been opened at this time and at least four governors of provinces did the same. Lady Hardinge opened a similar list for Indian ladies. As was to be expected, a wonderful change came over the Muslim sentiment towards non-Muslims. In the words of Lathrop Stoddard, whom we

*Dr. Ansari organised and headed a well-equipped Medical Mission to the Balkans. The mission paid all its own expenses and its services were highly appreciated by the Turks. A fuller account of the mission and its work will be found in an other book by the author.

have already quoted more than once, the intensity of this "change in the Muslim sentiment can be gauged by the numerous appeals made by the Indian Muhammadans at this time to Hindus". And the same writer goes on to quote, as a sample, one appeal entitled "The Message of the East". "Spirit of the East", read the message, "arise and repel the swelling flood of western aggression! Children of Hindustan, aid us with your wisdom, culture and wealth; lend us your power, the birth-right and heritage of the Hindu! Let the spirit powers hidden in the Himalayan mountain peaks arise! Let prayers to the god of battle float upward! Prayers that right may triumph over might; and call to your myriad gods to annihilate the armies of the foe".*

*_The New World of Islam_ by Lathrop Stoddard, page 60.